

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE SILVER STAR
TO
BENJAMIN D. HUTCHINS

Airman First Class Benjamin D. Hutchins distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United States near Bala Murghab, Afghanistan from 4 November 2009 to 6 November 2009. During this period, Airman Hutchins moved to secure multiple bundles from a missed aerial delivery that resulted in one bundle landing in the Bala Murghab River. Two Soldiers, while attempting to recover the bundle, were swept away by the current. In spite of imminent danger from hostile forces in the immediate area, Airman Hutchins dropped his personal protective equipment and dove into the frigid waters in an attempt to rescue the drowning Soldiers. Enemy forces moved into the area and began firing directly at Airman Hutchins from the east bank of the river. Airman Hutchins, despite the onslaught of enemy fire, refused to leave the two Soldiers and persisted in his recovery attempt until American forces arrived to repel the enemy and assist with the recovery. Throughout the night, additional forces continued to arrive to secure the east bank of the river at which time Airman Hutchins joined a patrol that subsequently came under intense enemy fire. Airman Hutchins, with complete disregard for his personal safety, volunteered with three other individuals to leave cover and concealment and engage the enemy in order to neutralize the hostile fire. Airman Hutchins moved under heavy and accurate rocket propelled grenade, machine gun and sniper fire across an open field with little to no cover or concealment. While continuing to move forward, he managed to direct the sensors of overhead close air support while simultaneously providing accurate supporting fire with his M-4 rifle. He killed one enemy armed with a rocket propelled grenade launcher, at close range, before the enemy could fire and wounded an additional enemy fighter all while providing targeting and controlling information to an overhead unmanned aerial vehicle that destroyed a second enemy fighting position with a Hellfire missile. Airman Hutchins' quick, decisive actions, tactical presence and calm demeanor enabled friendly forces to eventually overwhelm the enemy stronghold. His actions forced the enemy fighters to break contact and relinquish critical ground to friendly forces which enabled the safety of the recovery efforts for the two missing Soldiers. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Airman Hutchins has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

